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228 464 largest about 18; but as the smaller boats were the more numerous, he used 9 as an average to arrive at a total of 29,000 men employed in the pearl fisheries.

Zwemer estimated the number of pearling boats out of Bahrein in 1896 as about 900, those out of Qatar as 200, and total number of boats as 5,000, employing 30,000 men.[14] However, the figure of 900 does not seem to justify the total of 5,000; since Zwemer lived on Bahrein Island the figure of 900 would seem to be the more accurate. Zwemer is apparently responsible for the figure of 5,000 dhows in the pearl fisheries which has appeared in print so frequently since: Villiers and Simpich state that there were 5,000 boats at the turn of the century, employing 80,000 men,[15] while O'Shea states that in normal times there are about 5,000 boats employing 74,000 men.[16]

Evaluating these estimates and others not mentioned, one is led to the conclusion that there were never over 3,000 boats engaged in the Persian Gulf pearl fisheries, and probably not over 40,000 men. Taking the figures that may be considered as relatively reliable, we arrive at the following average for the fleet during the boom years:

Bahrein (Zwemer)	900
Kuwait	600
Qatar (Zwemer)	200
Eastern Arabian ports	200
Trucial coast (Whitelock)	700
Persian ports (Whitelock)	100
	2,700

This figure would seem to be a fair estimate for the size of the pearling fleet at the turn of the century, and if anything is on the high side.

228 464 178 The first few decades of the present century were the last prosperous years that the Gulf pearl fisheries saw. Whereas, at the turn of the century there were almost 3,000 boats engaged in the fisheries, today there are hardly one-fifth that number. An

[14] S. M. Zwemer, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–101.

[15] Alan Villiers, *Sons of Sinbad* (New York, 1940), p. 373; Frederick Simpich, "Rise of the New Arab Nation," *National Geographic Magazine*, vol. 56 (1929), p. 382.

[16] R. O'Shea, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

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estimate of the number of boats operating in 1946 would be as follows:

Bahrein	150
Kuwait	100
Darin, Qatif, Jubail	30
Trucial coast, Qatar, and Persian ports	250
	530

Manning these 500-odd craft were probably not over 10,000 men.

In Oman a strange balance of labor has been set up by the coincidence of the pearling season with the date harvest. Starting about June there is a migration of men northward from the Batinah Coast to the Trucial Coast; these men work the pearl fisheries. Some go north in caravans, others sail up in their *bedens* and other dhows. Opposed to the flood of men who make this temporary migration is a counter-migration of women who move southward from the Trucial Coast to the Batinah Coast; these women are hastening to the date groves for the date harvest. Often the women journey southward on the caravans which are returning from carrying the men to the Trucial Coast. Several months later, in September, the journeyers start the return home.

Bertram Thomas states that a considerable percentage of the army of men annually migrating northward to the Trucial Coast is composed of slaves.[17] These Batinah contingents are usually accompanied by a tribal agent who enlists them with some pearling *nakhoda*. The slaves are the best divers, as they have been at it from youth; freemen usually work the ropes in Oman. Slave divers are noted for their lack of fear of diving into deep water or into muddy water containing weeds. So great is the need for labor in the Trucial pearleries that boats sail into the Gulf from as far away as Socotra to join the pearl fishing.[18]

Pearl fishing is a seasonal occupation, as the divers must wait for warm summer water before starting to dive. Probably few people realize there is a winter in the Persian Gulf, and that the water gets so cold that swimming for periods of over five minutes is extremely chilling. In Hasa Province it is not uncommon

[17] Bertram Thomas, *Alarms and Excursions in Arabia* (London, 1931), p. 238.

[18] Ibid., p. 143